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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER AND COURSE OF STUDY

DECEMBER, 1901

SYLLABUS ON THE COURSE OF STUDY.

FOR ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION, KANSAS STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, DECEMBER 26, 1901.

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I. Basis: The needs of society determine the work of the school.

NOTE.—The founders of our republic established the common school as the indispensable means of educating children into citizenship. For obvious reasons, this new and stupendous plan of our forefathers has been executed only in a partial and imperfect way. There has been steady progress in this direction from the beginning. Notwithstanding the lack of the science of education, and the consequent crudeness of teaching, the main outcome of the school has been citizenship. It remains for us to bring to bear the entire work of the school upon the development of community life.

1. The supreme need of society is citizenship—the need that comprehends all other needs.

a. A citizen is one whose paramount interests are in the good and the growth of community life, in the life of the community, the city, the state, the nation, the world.

II. An ideal school is an ideal community, in which the motto, "Each for all and all for each," controls all effort.

1. This ideal is the only one to which the whole being, with its physical, mental, and moral powers, completely responds.

NOTE.—Owing to lack of space, some of the departmental outlines are omitted from this number. Miss Baber's outline on geography for the Elementary School, which was promised for December, will be continued in January.

2. It is fully adapted to the growth of body, mind, and soul in all stages of educative growth.

3. It arouses ever-growing and the deepest, strongest, and most abiding interests. It is the one means of transformation "in the newness of light."

4. It demands continuous originality on the part of both teacher and pupil. It stimulates creative power, fills the mind with problems and with clues to their solution.

5. Under this ideal, the purpose of the teacher and the pupil are one—concentration.

6. This ideal has in it the greatest possibilities for study and growth. It makes everlasting students of both teacher and pupil.

7. It is the only true and scientific guide for the selection, arrangement, and adaptation of subjects for the growth of the whole being—course of study.

8. The idea, "Each for all and all for each," makes morality, ethics, and practical religion the paramount issues of education.

9. Upon the movements toward the realization of this ideal (the golden rule) depends the progress of mankind.

III. A course of study is a systematic arrangement of subjects of thought for the teaching and training of children into citizenship.

1. The subjects of thought are comprehended under man and nature.

2. The modes of attention—observation, hearing, language, and reading—are means and processes of educational thinking.

3. The modes of expression—gesture, voice, speech, music, making, modeling, painting, drawing, and writing—have three functions, namely, physical development, mental power, and moral culture.

4. Arithmetic has to do entirely with the measurement of quantity in the study of man and nature.

5. The modes of attention, the modes of expression, and the study of arithmetic are indispensable auxiliaries to the study of man and nature. They must be used at every step to exercise the body, strengthen the mind, and cultivate motive. By their use, under the stimulus of growing thought, technique is most economically acquired.

a. Spelling, grammar, and all that is included in language, are acquired by the constant and correct use of speech and writing.

IV. Man and nature are the subjects of mind-nutrition, or the subjects of educative attention and expression.

1. The knowledge of man and nature is boundless. The development of community life is the only scientific guide for the selection of subjects from the inexhaustible storehouse.

2. The needs of school-community growth determine the selection of subjects from day to day. Such subjects should be adapted to the growth of the individual and his powers of attention and expression.

3. The pupil's power of attention (study), manifested by expression, determines the sequence (or growth) of subjects.

V. Correlation.

1. An ideal determines everything that goes into its realization. Therefore a course of study cannot be arranged under the usual classification of subjects—geography, history, science, etc.—as the needs of the mind and of the community may include several of these classified subjects in one lesson.

2. Correlation is an absolute rule of life and growth, while isolation of subjects does not meet the necessities of growth.

VI. Varying conditions.

1. Society, family, and race conditions vary; therefore the course of study must vary in selection and adaptation to special needs.

2. Natural and industrial environments differ in structure, vegetation, animal life, in agriculture, manufactures, commerce, etc.

3. The environment determines to a marked degree the selection of subjects of study, as field and industrial excursions are indispensable factors in education.

4. At best, a course of study is suggestive of the things to be done under varying circumstances, allowing the teacher to choose that which is needed by his or her class.

5. A course of study is a growth in which needless things are eliminated and good things added.

VII. Conclusion.

The common school has done more for human liberty than all other American institutions combined, and yet its tremendous task has only just begun. The problems of a free government are now greater than ever. A profound conviction that citizenship is the one thing needful is in the soul of every true patriot. The solemn truth is that mediæval methods, traditions of the ages, the learning and reciting of words, the "going over ground," the training of man into a subject, are by no means equal to the gigantic task before us. The entire direction of the common school must be the teaching and training of citizens. For this one purpose every reasonable means should be used. Fixed governments demand a fixed and uniform course of study. A democracy is a growth, and demands growth in the course of study, in teaching and training.